

JL, HR, DR-

9/20/78

After phoning to arrange it Bud came up last night and took Lil and me to dinner. My anticipation of his purpose was wrong. It had nothing to do with the HSCA. He made me an indefinite proposal for co-authoring Agent Oswald, with an alternative of buying the work I've done on this. He says that if I do not agree he will proceed and write the book on his own. He says also that he will write me a proposal. I seek your opinions.

It was a very pleasant dinner, Chinese. We returned here afterward and spoke until about 10:30.

I do not reject the idea out of hand. It has some decided advantages. I also see many problems with it, regardless of the form. Some have to do with Bud's notions or beliefs, as his belief that Nosenko was really sent here to mislead in the JFK assassination. I told him what the FBI says Nosenko really told it. He did not correlate this with what happened to Nosenko virtually immediately and I did not take time to do it for him.

I did not have time to think this through. I had no advance indication of what he wanted to speak about so I did not have any lead time. I can report some of my immediate, instinctive reactions, some of which it would have been impolitic to communicate to Bud. I'll not have much time for detail now because when I returned to my car after supper I saw a large area of drip under the engine. It is present this morning so I know it is my car and when the nearest garage opens I'll have to take it there in time to be back for the beginning of the assassins hearings.

Yesterday was also the weakest day I've had in a year. I was not in any real pain but I was weak all day. So I slept later today, which makes me later now.

I told Bud that doing much writing before the committee's report is out is at best risky and that any book now will have to survive in confrontation with what the committee does and reports. I doubt he appreciates this and believe he writes the committee off entirely. I think that despite all we believe about it and what may be reflected in news accounts I do not see it will largely succeed in its newest covering up and we'd best be prepared for this. I put it to Bud that unless there is a vanity interest concepts should be in terms of hoping for some success. He says he has no vanity interests and indicates he has major publisher interest. Maybe major is not the right word.

I also told him that my instinctive feeling is that any book now, because it has to confront the committee, requires a good king book and that what I have for it is less dependent on analysis and willingness to believe and that the two would have to be done. He does not see this and claims he will pay me enough to enable me to do this, too.

As we talked I asked who would do the editing or writing. He at first said he would write and then said he would provide the editing. If it is a Michael Ewing I have no interests.

I said I thought it might work if I could dictate the rough draft on tape and then have it typed and edited. (During tax season I could not do this and he offered to have that done or to provide a steno, which indicates a fair degree of interest.)

I said again that I'll need help and that some of what requires being done can be done now, like drawing all the information together and having it ready. Of course if I were to have a helper more could be done now. I could be writing parts of the book that will not require knowing what the committee does or influences. I could, for example, dictate the King book before the end of the committee's ~~life and~~ Lil could be typing that up. I did not tell him this in part because he seems to be opposed to a King book and in part because he has displayed an interest in great haste.

I think that in any such project the biggest problems would be Bud's ideas. Or perhaps his unwillingness to accept mine. Others, like who rewrites or edits, are also serious. These need not be insurmountable and I am for being able to do the book if the rest of my life makes it possible and if it says what I want to say. Hastily,